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Message Text

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PAGE 01 MUSCAT 01070 310446Z

14-R
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ONY-00 /011 W
---------- 047818
R 310320Z AUG 76
FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2431
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMECONSUL DHAHRAN

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STADIS//

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAGR MU XF
SUBJECT: AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE FOR THE ARABIAN PENINUSLA

REF: (A) STATE 212493, (B) 75 MUSCAT 875

1. AS WE STATED IN REF (B) WE SEE PROPOSED ASSIGNMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ATTACHE FOR ARABIAN PENINSULA AS USEFUL. AGATT'S ACTIVITIES SHOULD HELP BOOST U.S. AGRIBUSINESS EXPORTS TO OMAN, WHICH AT PRESENT REPRESENT ONLY 5 PERCENT OF A $100 MILLION MARKET. DUE TO CHANGES IN OMANI DIET AND INCREASED NUMBER OF SUPERMARKETS CATERING TO EXPATRIATES, THERE HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIAL RISE IN DEMAND FOR IMPORTED CANNED AND FROZEN FOODS; EUROPEAN FIRMS HAVE OBTAINED MOST OF THIS BUSINESS, BUT THERE IS SUBSTANTIAL LOCAL INTEREST IN U.S. PROCESSED FOODS. AGATT COULD ALSO HELP US PUSH EXPORTS OF RAW FOODSTUFFS, ESPECIALLY WHEAT FOR FLOUR MILL UNDER CONSTRUCTION, AND FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES, WHICH ARE NO LONGER OBTAINABLE FROM LEBANON.

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2. WE VISUALIZE GREATEST ADVANTAGE OF AGATT IN HIS USING CONTACTS

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WITH U.S. AGRIBUSINESS TO GET QUICK SERVICE FOR OMANI IMPORTERS. BIGGEST OBSTACLES TO OBTAINING LARGER SHARE OF IMPORTED FOOD MARKET ARE PROBABLY DELIVERY TIME AND SLOWNESS IN COMMUNICATION WITH U.S. FOR EXAMPLE, DELAYED RESPONSE TO OUR ENQUIRIES THROUGH CONVENTIONAL CHANNELS ON BEHALF OF FIRMS INTERESTED IN IMPORTING AMERICAN WHEAT FLOUR RESULTED IN OMANI COMPANIES TURNING TO AUSTRALIAN SUPPLIERS. WE WOULD HOPE THAT AGATT COULD GET POSITIVE REPLIES WITHIN A WEEK OR TWO FROM AMERICAN FIRMS INTERESTED IN EXPORTING FOOD COMMODITIES TO OMAN.

3. ALTHOUGH AGATT'S MAIN TASK WOULD BE AGRICULTURAL MARKETING, WE WOULD HOPE THAT HE COULD SPEND SOME TIME ON AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. OMANGOV IS PLACING HIGH PRIORITY ON INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION IN THE INTERIOR DURING NEXT FIVE YEARS, AND WE WOULD WELCOME AGATT'S VIEWS ON HOW U.S. AGRIBUSINESS FIRMS COULD PARTICIPATE.

4. EITHER KUWAIT OR MANAMA WOULD BE GOOD LOCATION FROM OUR POINT OF VIEW.
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